

In Germany

Comintern Loses Fresh Opportunity

The Wedding convention of the Communist Party of Germany basing itself on the so-called "third period" invented by the Sixth World Congress proclaimed the presence of "an acute revolutionary situation" in the country. The permanent phrasemonger, Thaelmann, strove to demonstrate this incessantly in his rhetorical reports. The official Party press daily devoted to this discovery long winded articles. The talk was of "mass struggles", of "direct assaults" that would smash the capitalist state. Because we of the Left Opposition characterized this appraisal of the situation as unMarxian and mechanical we were designated as pessimists who had "lost their belief in the revolution". The principal slogan of the Party for this "period" invented by the Party officialdom was: "Proletarians fight for a Soviet Germany". On the basis of such an estimation it was no longer necessary to approach the working masses exploited by the bourgeoisie with the help of the social democracy, on the every day questions.

"The Acute Revolutionary Crisis"

It was clear to every Marxist that this noise of the "acute revolutionary situation" was a criminal piece of rhetoric that had nothing in common with the Marxist reality. The Comintern leadership which since 1924 has brought tremendous defeats to the Communist Parties and the proletariat through its false policies (1923 in Germany; 1925-27 in China; 1926 in England, Russia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland) and which since 1928 has carried out an ultra-Left zig-zag, would not take the real situation into consideration.

Let us return to the realities of the German situation. What do the figures say regarding the struggles and temper of the working class?

Facts and Figures

In 1928 the number of strike days in Germany was 10.4 millions and in 1929 this number sinks to 4.4 millions: in 1928, 780,000 workers went on strike whereas in 1929, 233,000 went on strike. Whoever will not take these figures into account cannot understand that strikes are a barometer of the militancy of the working class. These figures mean that the militancy of the workers had declined.

The results on the Provincial (Landtag) elections and the municipal (communal) elections both show everywhere a marked decline in the votes of the Communist Party of Germany. On the other hand the social democracy has either held its own or even made gains. The National Socialists (Fascists) have registered very considerable successes. In Red Thuringia the Communist fraction in the Provincial Legislature is composed of six comrades as against the seven representatives of the Fascists. The Party itself has not only not increased its membership but has lost members. The Party membership can at most be estimated at 70,000.

Party Influence Sinks

In all proletarian organizations and particularly in the trade unions the influence of the Party has almost completely disappeared. The "tremendous" successes of the Party in the factory committee elections with the help of the "red shop committee slates" were in the first instance only the result of the dissatisfaction of the workers, a protest against capitalist repression and its henchmen the reformists. They did not at all represent any readiness immediately to smash the capitalist state. The best proof of the justice of this estimate are the results in the Leuna Works, in the Opel Automobile Works and the Hamburg Docks which record a huge decline in the votes of the Communist slate.

Percentage of Total Votes in

	Leuna Works		Berlin V.A.G.	
	1929	1930	1929	1930
Red List	51.3	34.7	52.4	28.
"Free Trade Unions"	32.7	37	29	28
Christian Union	3.2	5.3	7.3	8.6
Patriotic Unions	9.6	16		
Nationalists			9	7.2
Fascist				6

The workers who gave their votes to the Communist Party in the preceding year turned their backs on the policies of the Party because they showed no way out against the capitalist offensive.

And what are the facts concerning the most recent proof of the "acute revolution-

ary situation" in Germany—i. e., the demonstrations! The calendar-like campaigns of the Party have been successively weaker. With three and a half million unemployed the Party succeeded in bringing out to the streets from 5 to 7 per cent only. The last demonstrations of February and March ended in a great fiasco.

Nevertheless the situation in Germany has been favorable for the separation of great sections of the working class from the social democratic party and the crystallization of a Communist mass party in Germany.

Social Democracy Betrays

The social democracy has entered into a new coalition with the finance capitalist bourgeoisie. In contrast to its former coalition policy, the situation of the S.D.P. was incomparably more difficult. Why? In former years of its coalition, the social democracy could still present the workers with some minimum reforms. The bourgeoisie could not so quickly forget the revolution. They still felt the temper of the October atmosphere of 1923. The bourgeoisie was, moreover, not strong enough economically nor politically to force across its will against the resistance of the workers. The economic and political organs of bourgeois authority had not yet been extensively enough developed. The bourgeoisie had still to make concessions to the workers.

But the coalition policy of Hilferding-Mueller in 1928 was that of the direct betrayal of the every day interests of the working class. The social democrats worked not only for the extension of the power of the capitalist state (cruisers, police, Defence of the Republic Act) not only supported the further offensive of the banks and trusts (concentration, rationalization, etc.) but betrayed everything the workers had conquered from the capitalists in the period of the revolutionary wave. Through their Minister of Labor Wissell, the social democrats agreed to the wage reduction. They voted for the reduction of the unemployed benefits. They began the reduction of the Sick Benefit pensions. With their support of the Concordat agreement, the social democrats helped to re-establish the clerical reaction. They helped to impose further indirect taxes on the masses. And all this in the period of the greatest unemployment in Germany. The social dem-

ocracy has not only not given the workers any new reforms but is actively aiding the bourgeoisie to deprive the workers of those concessions they had already secured by the road of struggle.

Looking at the situation from this viewpoint everything was favorable for an advance of Communism. Had the Communist Party linked its slogans and platform with the every day needs and problems of the workers, it could have broken the tie between the social democratic workers and their leaders and have assured the triumph of Communism.

But all our Communist Party leaders could do was to shower the social democracy with abuse.

The False Approach of the Stalinists

To this end the formula of "social fascism" was invented. The agitation against "social fascism" took on a hysterical scope. Not only was the Berlin Police President Zoergel characterized as a "social fascist" but every worker in the social democracy was likewise denounced as a "social fascist". The slogans became "Out with the social fascists from the factories". "Out with the social fascist children from the schools."

The tactics of Remmelle and Thaelmann gave the social democratic leaders their opportunity to cover up their betrayal of the interests of the workers and aided them to pass over from a defensive to an offensive position. The slogan of "social fascism" played into the hands of the social democratic demagogues: "To the extent that the Comintern identifies the democratic domestic of capitalism with its fascist bodyguard, it does the social democracy the very best service. . . In those countries where fascism represents a power, Italy first, then Austria and Germany, the social democrats have no difficulty proving to the masses not only the differences but even the hostility between themselves and fascism. To this extent the social democrats are relieved of the necessity of disproving that they are the democratic servants of capital. The whole political struggle is shifted to an artificial plane which is exceptionally favorable to the social democrats." (L. Trotsky—Open Letter)

The very favorable situation could have been utilized had a different policy been applied—not the "social fascism" slogan nor the Brandlerist conception of a united

In France

Opposition Defends Indo-Chinese Rebels

The International Left Communist Opposition has extended its struggle to one more sector. This is in connection with the revolutionary movement in Indo-China against the sanguinary acts of repression of French Imperialism.

The official Communist Party in France is non-existent so far as Indo-China is concerned where the proletariat is being ferociously exploited and where imperialism maintains its police dictatorship over the native proletarian population by fire and sword, torture and death. This atrocious misery has already evoked movements of spontaneous revolt that the young native bourgeoisie more or less independent of French capital, has sought to direct to its own ends. In consequence of the revolts of Yen Bay, of Vinh, etc., 39 Indo-Chinese revolutionaries have been sentenced to death and four of these have already been executed. The Criminal Commission of Phu Tho is about to condemn ten other revolutionaries to death, one to life long imprisonment, twenty-six to hard labor for the rest of their lives, thirty-eight to deportation, etc.

The Indo-Chinese workers in France and the French proletarians have under the leadership of the Communist League of France (Opposition) embarked on an energetic protest action to prevent these sentences from being carried out any further and this campaign must strike an echo in the hearts of the workers of all countries.

In front of the Elysee in Paris a strong demonstration took place on the call of the Communist League following which several comrades were imprisoned. Despite all the attention this demonstration stirred up in the bourgeois press, despite

the fury of the attack of the government against the Left Opposition, the leadership of the French Communist Party and the Humanite have MAINTAINED COMPLETE SILENCE because our Indo-Chinese comrades fought under the flag of the Communist League (Opposition). It was only after direct protests and by way of leaflets and public notices that the Humanite finally made up its mind to defend our Indo-Chinese comrades.

But the opportunist leadership of the Party and the Humanite even while defending our comrades, betrayed them. In the articles of the Humanite they were represented as being the adherents of the official policies of the Communist Party and the Stalinist policy in the colonies for "the right of self-determination for their complete independence" (Humanite, May 28th, 1930). Nothing could be more false.

The Indo-Chinese comrades have condemned the Stalinist colonial policy applied by the Comintern regime throughout the world and particularly in Asia. The Indo-Chinese comrades are an integral part of the International Opposition.

Together with the Left Opposition, the Indo-Chinese comrades are not satisfied to fight for "self-determination up to complete independence" after the fashion of Chiang Kai-Shek but call for the formation of an independent revolutionary party of the working class to wage the struggle for the social revolution against both French imperialism and native bourgeois exploitation equally and in closest contact with the French working class. "Proletarians of all countries, unite" must become more than a mere slogan. It must be carried into life. —P. NAVILLE

front which is always the tail-end of the social democracy—but the Leninist tactics of the united front would have unmasked the Left as well as the Right wing leaders of the social democracy. Not "Red Factory slates" at any price, not the abandonment of work in the trade unions but tireless work in all the mass organizations was the need.

It was evident to us all that the social democracy would be thrown out of office as soon as the bourgeoisie could afford to dispense with its services. But the centrist leadership of the Communist Party missed the real point of the situation. The result has been the isolation of the Communist Party inside the working class and the consolidation of the social democracy despite its betrayals. The S.P.D. even parades now as an "Opposition" Party. The subjective factor in history—the Communist Party—has again failed.

—ROMAN WELL

In Mexico

Diego Rivera Retires from Political Life

The leadership of the official Communist Party in Mexico have been making incessant attacks on the expelled Mexican Communist artist, Diego Rivera, who for a period of time after his expulsion was a member of the Left Opposition group. The position and work of this talented artist is such that a good regime in the International drew him ever closer to Communism—a bad regime repulses him. As a "fellow traveller" his services to the Communist movement have been and can continue to be in the future very considerable. So long as the Stalin faction regarded him as a useful intellectual lackey—a la Enrbusse in France and Michael Gold in the United States—he was held in high esteem by them. When Rivera began to revolt against the poisonous atmosphere created in the Comintern by the bureaucracy—he was discovered to be a "counter-revolutionary"

Owing to his conflict with the authorities Rivera lost his painting assignment in the National Palace and was expelled together with all his followers, teachers and students from the "National Autonomous University" of Mexico for the radical course of studies he introduced into the School of Fine Arts. In his fight against the reactionaries the slogan of Rivera's group of students was "Against the bourgeois university, for a University of the Workers and Peasants." The more heroic sacrifices of the embattled Barbusses and Golds are unknown to us. We do know this: that the flaming proletarian litterateur and editor of the New Masses, Michael Gold, never recoiled in horror from the idea of having the "proletarian" banker, Otto H. Kahn finance his productions.

In his desire to take the wind out of the sails of Stalinist demagogy, Rivera has sent us the following statement for publication:

"I declare that neither the Communist Party nor the bourgeoisie can hold the Communist Opposition responsible for my actions for which I assume full responsibility, not having had since the deportation of comrade Negrete any contact with the Opposition. The special character of my professional work—that of a mural painter—obliges me to sustain certain economic contacts with those who pay for this work—which has always been used in the interests of the revolution—as my paintings can prove. For this reason however I am continually utilized by the Stalinist party and by the bourgeoisie as an arm against my own comrades, in consequence of which, I declare that I cannot amputate from my personality that which is my life itself, that is to say, my art; and being unwilling to hinder the activities of the Opposition by my presence in its ranks, and considering it my duty, I retire definitely from all political activity."

Rivera further declares that his sympathy continues as formerly with the Opposition program as against the opportunism and adventurism of the official leadership.

If the number on your wrapper is

49

then your subscription to the Militant has expired. Renew immediately in order to avoid missing any issues.